



# INDIANA CAREER COUNCIL

## CORE 40 SUBCOMMITTEE

### **Indiana Career Council Core 40 Study Subcommittee Diploma Content & Structure Taskforce**

**December 17, 2014  
Indiana Statehouse  
Room 156B  
200 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204**

#### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Jennifer Berry, Amanda Culhan, Nicole Detrick, Carroll Easterday, Kris Emaus, Vickie Ferrell, Pamela Horne, James Little, Chris Lowery, Teresa Lubbers, Heather Moffat, Brad Rhorer, Superintendent Glenda Ritz, TJ Rivard, Dave Shane, Daniel Tyree

**Members Absent:** Rick Barnett, Martin Padgett

**Staff Present:** Marie Mackintosh

**Special Guests:** Jason Bearce, Sam Snideman

#### **I. Call to Order and Welcome**

Commissioner Teresa Lubbers and Superintendent Glenda Ritz called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM and welcomed members.

#### **II. Review and Approval of November 18, 2014 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Lowery moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Tyree seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **III. Overview of One-Diploma Models**

Ms. Lubbers introduced Sam Snideman, Assistant Director of the Indiana Regional Works Councils. Mr. Snideman presented Maryland's one diploma option. They have a graduation rate of about 85% with 1.4% of students earning a Certificate of Attendance. Maryland does not have waivers. Comparatively, Indiana has about an 81% non-waiver graduation rate. Maryland has had no formal pushback from post-secondary institutions for not making a distinction between college readiness and career readiness. Ms. Lubbers stated that Maryland has a high post-secondary success rate. Approximately two thirds of Maryland high school graduates meet the minimum requirements for Maryland's public post-secondary institutions.

Mr. Snideman then discussed North Carolina's one diploma model. There is no requirement for fine arts and lower requirements for both science and social studies. The math, science, and social studies

credits are distributed among career and technical education (CTE) requirements. More information is being sought from North Carolina.

Also, Georgia has recently adopted a one diploma system for all students graduating in 2012 and later as part of their involvement in the American Diploma Project.

#### **IV. Discussion of Seals/Badges**

Mr. Snideman stated that Georgia offered five seal options but have since moved away from this approach due to their involvement in the American Diploma Project. Local school boards could require certain electives in the seal requirements.

Virginia has a robust seal system featuring five seal options. Mr. Snideman reached out to the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech and their responses stated that the seals carry no weight and one Dean didn't even know the seals existed. They stated the factors that do matter are the rigor of the coursework as compared to what is available to the student, transcripts, GPA, and ACT and SAT scores. Ms. Easterday asked who benefits from seals in Virginia. Mr. Snideman stated that the two universities mentioned saw little to no value in the seals. Four of the five seals do not touch CTE at all. Mr. Rivard asked if students may view seals as a motivator to complete a pathway or a diploma. Mr. Snideman stated that this could be the view of the Virginia Department of Education.

#### **V. Next Steps**

Mr. Snideman mentioned that the time to make recommendations (October, 2015) is approaching. It may be a good idea to put in place the structure that the taskforce wants to settle on (such as the number of diplomas to offer). After that, the taskforce may discuss in further detail the content of the diploma options. Ms. Lubbers mentioned that there may be statutes that need to be changed depending on what diploma structure the taskforce adopts.

Ms. Mackintosh introduced the work completed by Jason Bearce, Associate Commissioner of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. Mr. Bearce asked if Indiana should reallocate general electives to help guide students down a pathways. All students should have some form of financial literacy while in high school. Once students have a grasp on the pathway they want to pursue, that student should be able to partake in work-based learning opportunities within that pathway to help confirm whether they are happy with that pathway or not.

Mr. Shane stated that the curriculum presented by Mr. Bearce resembles that of the curriculum required in the 1960s. Times have changes and this may not be suitable for today's environment. Students need to make their career choice before junior or senior year. Also, he is in favor of eliminating the general diploma option because it leaves students below the line which offers multiple career options and opportunities after they graduate.

Ms. Berry stated that about 10,000 students each year earn the general diploma in Indiana. This diploma option allows student to graduate high school. Eliminating this option may have an adverse effect on not only student achievement, but on graduation rates as well. Ms. Lubbers stated that we need to look into states with only one diploma option to see how they maintain such high graduation rates. Further, Indiana would need to revise pathways in order to bridge the gaps that exist relating to the general diploma. The taskforce should take a deeper look into the general diploma option currently offered in Indiana in order to discuss any future changes in Indiana's diploma structure. Mr. Rivard provided an example of a school that raised the minimum requirements in both math and science and were able to maintain their graduation rates even with the more rigorous curriculum.

Ms. Lubbers asked if the taskforce should look at the students earning the general diploma to see what the hurdles are that cause students to not earn the Core 40. The taskforce may want to look into the statute allowing parents to opt their child out of the Core 40 diploma and see if increasing the opt out requirements, thus making it more difficult to do so, may help reduce the number of students earning the general diploma.

SPI Ritz stated that the taskforce needs to discuss ways to transition away from the general diploma.

**VI. Adjournment**

SPI Ritz adjourned the meeting at 1:35 PM.